

## **§ 283.7**

following service of a ruling in accordance with § 283.5, FNS shall file an answer signed by the FNS Administrator or authorized representative or the attorney of record in the appeal. The attorney may file an appearance of record prior to or simultaneously with the filing of the answer.

(b) *Contents.* The answer shall clearly admit, deny, or explain each of the allegations of the appeal petition and shall:

(1) Clearly set forth any defense asserted by FNS; or

(2) State that FNS admits all the facts alleged in the appeal petition; or

(3) State that FNS admits the jurisdictional allegations of the appeal petition and neither admits nor denies the remaining allegations and consents to the issuance of an order without further procedure.

(c) *Default.* Failure to file a timely answer shall be deemed, for purposes of the appeal, an admission of the allegations in the appeal petition and failure to deny or otherwise respond to an allegation of the appeal petition shall be deemed for purposes of the appeal, an admission of said allegation, unless FNS and the State agency have agreed to a consent decision pursuant to § 283.10.

## **§ 283.7 Procedures upon failure to file an answer.**

The failure by FNS to file an answer shall constitute a waiver of hearing. Upon such failure to file, the State agency shall file a proposed decision, along with a motion for adoption thereof, both of which shall be served upon FNS by the State agency. Within 10 days after service of such motion and proposed decision, FNS may file objections thereto. If the ALJ finds that meritorious objections have been filed, the State agency's motion shall be denied with supporting reasons. If meritorious objections are not filed, the ALJ shall issue an initial decision without further procedures or hearing. Copies of the initial decision or denial of the State agency's motion shall be served on each of the parties and shall be included as part of the official record. Where the decision as proposed by the State agency is adopted as the ALJ's initial decision, such decision of

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the ALJ shall become final and effective 30 days after service in accordance with § 283.17(c)(2) unless reconsideration or review by the Judicial Officer is sought as discussed in §§ 283.17(d) and 283.20.

## **§ 283.8 Rebuttal or amendment of appeal or answer.**

(a) Not later than 30 days after FNS submits an answer in accordance with § 283.6, the State agency may submit rebuttal evidence.

(b) At any time prior to the filing of a motion for a hearing pursuant to § 283.15(b), the appeal petition or the answer may be amended without prior authorization by the ALJ. Thereafter, such an amendment may only be made as authorized by the ALJ upon a showing of cause.

## **§ 283.9 Withdrawal of appeal.**

At any time before the ALJ files an initial decision, the State agency may withdraw its appeal and agree to pay the full amount of the claim. By withdrawing an appeal, the State agency waives all opportunity to appeal or seek further administrative or judicial review on the claim or related matters.

## **§ 283.10 Consent decision.**

At any time before the ALJ files an initial decision, FNS and the State agency may agree to entry of a consent decision. Such decision shall be filed in the form of a decision signed by the parties with appropriate space for signature by the ALJ and shall contain an admission of at least the jurisdictional facts, consent to the issuance of the agreed decision without further procedure and such other admissions or statements as may be agreed between the parties. The ALJ shall enter such decision without further procedures, unless an error is apparent on the face of the document. Such decision shall be final and shall take effect 30 days after the date of the delivery or service of such decision and is not subject to further administrative or judicial.

## **§ 283.11 Prehearing conference and procedure.**

(a) *Time and place.* The ALJ shall direct the parties or their counsel to participate in a prehearing conference at